

1 **LOW DENSITY IRON BASED ALLOY FOR A GOLF CLUB HEAD**

2 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

3 **1. Field of the Invention**

4 The present invention relates to an iron based alloy for a golf club
5 head, and more particularly to an iron based alloy that is formed by variations
6 in the composition of the alloy and the operational conditions during the
7 production process. The alloy has a low-density of less than 6.6 g/cm³ and an
8 excellent rust resistant property and is used to produce a golf club head.

9 **2. Description of Related Art**

10 Present conventional golf club manufacturing technology consists of
11 two manufacturing methods, lost-wax casting and forging. Lost-wax casting
12 starts with preparing a wax model. The wax model is coated alternately with a
13 heatproof, siliceous slurry and dry sand or other dry aggregate several times.
14 Then, the mold with the wax model is dried and heated to remove the wax to
15 complete the mold. When producing a golf club head, melted liquid metal is
16 poured into the mold to form the golf club head.

17 The forging process starts with preparing individual pieces of a golf club
18 head, usually three pieces. The pieces of the golf head are welded together to
19 form a complete golf club head that can be attached to a shaft. In addition to the
20 two manufacturing methods, some club heads have a finish applied by surface
21 plating, such as nickel-plating, cobalt-plating, diamond-plating or paneling
22 treatment.

23 As shown in Table 1, the lost-wax casting method has the lowest
24 manufacturing cost, but the forging method has more advantages than lost-wax

1 casting. A comparison of metallurgical characteristics of lost-wax casting and
 2 forging is listed in Table 2.

3 Table 1 – General Characteristics

| Feature | Lost-wax Casting | Forging |
|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Controllability | Low | Good |
| Sweet spot | Small | Big |
| Strike distance | Less | Farther |
| Variety of CG | Less | Good |
| Torque | Less | Big |
| Softness | Less | Middle |
| Accuracy | Less | Good |
| Stability | Less | Good |

4 Table 2 – Metallurgical Characteristics

| Mode | Code | Y.S. (Mpa) | U.T.S. (Mpa) | E.R. (%) | D (10 ³ kg/m ³) | Hardness | Notes |
|---------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|---|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Casting | 17-4PH | 611.8 | 864.9 | 23 | 7.8 | HRc30 | 1030°C 1Hour +720°C 5Hour |
| | 431SS | 661.0 | 752.5 | 22 | 7.7 | HRc20 | 720°C 3hour |
| | 255SS | 682.1 | 110 | 14 | 7.8 | HRc25 | 1060°C 1Hour |
| | 304SS | 210.9 | 75 | 40 | 8.0 | R _B 88 | 1030°C 1Hour |
| | Ti | 436.0 | 492.3 | 18 | 4.5 | | Annealing |
| | Ti-6Al-4V | 879.0 | 949.4 | 12 | 4.5 | | Melting and aging |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Forging | 304SS | 225.0 | 506.3 | 64 | 7.9 | | Forging and annealing |
| | S25C | 309.4 | 562.6 | 31 | 7.9 | R _b 82 | |
| | Ti-6Al-4V | 1075.9 | 1146.3 | 14 | 4.5 | HRc36 | |
| | 455SS | 1635.1 | 1716.6 | 13.28 | 7.8 | HRc45 | |
| | 465SS | 1760.6 | 1866.3 | 10.72 | 7.8 | HRc51 | |

Clubs are either irons or woods. Generally speaking, a wood has an enlarged head with an inclined face and a longer shaft than an iron because the wood is usually used at a tee or to hit a ball a long distance. Golf clubs are categorized in the following groups based on the angle of the face and different lengths of the shaft,: driver, No. 1 wood; fairway driver or brassie, No. 2 wood; high-lofted wood or spoon, No. 3 and 4 woods; and approach wood or braffing spoon, No. 5, 7 and 9 woods;. A golfer selects a particular wood based on his or physical condition and preference.

The heads of conventional woods are made of wood, particularly persimmon. However, due to considering of resistance to corrosion, ductility and high ratio of strength to weight of the golf club heads, the wood in woods has been gradually replaced by metal alloys, usually, for example, pure titanium, 6-4 titanium alloy, SP700 titanium alloy, 15-3-3-2 titanium alloy, 2041 titanium alloy, 2205 two-phase stainless steel, 17-4PH stainless steel, AISI431, AISI455, AISI456, aero Al-Li alloy, Be-Cu alloy, etc. Wherein pure titanium, 6-4 titanium alloy, SP700 titanium alloy, 15-3-3-2 titanium alloy and 2041 titanium alloy are well known, expensive materials. Presently, metal alloys are more popular than wood in manufacturing of golf club woods.

A design tendencies with regard to woods is to improve the ability to successful hit a golf ball, and the designs tend to have the following features.

1. The heads of the clubs are enlarged to increase the size of the sweet spot on the face of the club and improve the probability of successfully hitting the golf ball. The volume of the woods can be from 280 c.c. to 310 c.c., and even as much as 350 c.c., and some irons are also formed with some oversized features, particularly such as having a large sweet spot to promote successfully hitting the golf ball and increasing the distance that the ball travels.

2. The center of gravity of the club head is lowered to increase the stability of the club head when striking of the ball, improve the point of contact on the club face and increase the distance the golf ball travels.

3. The shape of the club head is designed to have a streamlined face with low drag. To keep the striking stable and reduce the torque energy loss, the shape of the club head is designed in a computer to create the streamlined face on the club head to reduce the air-resisting coefficient and change the center of gravity and sweet spot of the club head.

The major elements of a golf club when performing a stress analysis are the striking surface, the sole and the club shaft. The striking surface or face of the golf head is the main stress point since it directly contacts the ball. The striking surface is usually 2.5~3.5mm thick. Durability and rigidity are basic requirements for the material of the striking surface. For a wood, the durability is mostly among 60~150ksi (N/mm²). The sole is the bottom of the golf head, is a minor stress point of the golf club and is usually 3~5mm thick. Because the sole contacts the ground, basic requirements for the material of the sole are wear-

1 resistance, corrosion resistance and excellent strength. The shaft of the club
2 flexes during the swing, absorbs shock transmitted through the club head and is
3 made of metal or carbon fiber material.

4 Additionally, the governing bodies for golf have established standards
5 for golf clubs. Consequently, the weight, density and strength of the material
6 used in club heads are important factors in designing and manufacturing golf
7 clubs.

8 Metallurgical properties and strength of metal alloy head for a
9 conventional wood listed in Table 3. The best metal alloy head for a wood has a
10 tensile strength of 60~155ksi, yield strength of 30~145ksi (1Mpa= 0.10205ksi),
11 elongation rate of 12~64% and density of 4.5~8.0g/cm³.

12 Table 3: Metallurgical properties and strength of metal alloy head.

| Feature | Ti(JIS2) | Ti-6Al-4V | 304 | 17-4PH | 465 | 15-3-3-3 |
|---|----------|-----------|-------|--------|--------|----------|
| S.W. (10 ³ kg/m ³) | 4.51 | 4.5 | 7.9 | 7.80 | 7.82 | 5.0 |
| U.T.S (Mpa) | 563.4 | 1146.3 | 506.3 | 864.9 | 1773.3 | 1221.3 |
| Y.S (Mpa). | 521.1 | 1075.9 | 225.4 | 611.8 | 1642.2 | 1117.8 |
| S.S (10 ⁴ M) | 1.249 | 2.549 | 0.64 | 1.109 | 2.268 | 2.442 |

13 In the recent one to two decades, metallurgical properties of Fe-Al-Mn
14 based alloy have been found to be promoted by controlling the content and by
15 performing heat treatment to obtain high strength and toughness, good resistance
16 of low or high temperature and resistance to corrosion. The following papers
17 have described these characteristics in detail.

18 “The Structure and Properties of Austenitic Alloys Containing Aluminum
19 and Silicon” by D. J. Schmatz, Trans. ASM., vol. 52, p. 898, 1960;

1 “Phase Transformation Kinetics in Steel 9G28Yu9MVB” by G. B.
2 Krivonogov et al., Phys. Met. & Metallog, vol. 4, p. 86, 1975;
3 “An Austenitic Stainless Steel without Nickel or Chromium” by S. K.
4 Banerji, Met. Prog, p. 59, 1978;
5 “Phase Decomposition of Rapidly Solidified Fe-Mn-Al-C Austenitic
6 Alloys” by J. Charles et al., Met. Prog., p. 71, 1981;
7 “New Stainless Steel without Nickel or Chromium for Alloys Applications”
8 by R. Wang, Met. Prog, p. 72, 1983;
9 “New Cryogenic Materials” by J. Charles et al., Met. Prog, p. 71, 1981; and
10 “Electron Microscope Observation of Phase Decompositions in an Austenitic
11 Fe-8.7 Al-29.7 Mn-1.04 C Alloy” by S. C. Tjong, Mater. Char, vol. 24, p. 275,
12 1990.

13 Reviewing the above noted references, manganese added to Fe-Al-Mn-C
14 based alloy content has been found to stabilize the austenite structure and retain
15 an FCC (face-centered cube) structure under room or lower than room
16 temperature, which is beneficial to enhance the workability and ductility of the
17 alloy. The aluminum content has a strong effect on oxidation resistance. The
18 carbon content mainly helps precipitation of strengthening elements when the
19 alloy is quenched rapidly after a solution heat treatment at a temperature from
20 1050°C to 1200°C, and then aged at a temperature from 450°C to 750°C. The
21 alloy has a mono austenite structure during the quenching, and the fine (Fe,
22 Mn)₃AlC_x κ carbides are precipitated coherently within the austenite matrix
23 during the aging. Additionally, after a lengthy aging, phase decomposition like
24 $\gamma \rightarrow \alpha + \beta\text{-Mn}$ or $\gamma \rightarrow \alpha + \beta\text{-Mn} + \kappa$ is produced on the grain boundary of the alloy

1 dependent on its chemical composition. The coarse precipitates of β -Mn will
2 deteriorate the ductility of the alloy. Consequently, to obtain κ -phase carbides
3 precipitated coherently within the austenite matrix and without the coarse β -Mn
4 being precipitated is an important method for the alloy to possess satisfactory
5 strength and ductility for the Fe-Al-Mn-C based alloy.

6 Fe-Al-Mn based alloys are found to mainly consists of iron with 5 to 12 wt %
7 aluminum, 20 to 35 wt % manganese, 0.3 to 1.3 wt % carbon, and remaining
8 weight of the alloy being iron. After being solution heat treated, quenched and
9 aged, the Fe-Al-Mn based alloys will have different metallurgical properties
10 dependent on their chemical compositions, a tensile strength in a range of 80 ksi
11 to 200 ksi, a yield strength in a range from 60 ksi to 180 ksi and an elongation
12 rate in a range from 62 % to 25 %. The chemical compositions and metallurgical
13 properties of typical Fe-Al-Mn alloys, which have been studied by experts in this
14 field, are listed in Table 4 and Table 5 for comparison.

15 Table 4: Fe-Al-Mn alloys

| FeAlMn | Fe | Al | Mn | C | Other | Mechanical feature | | | Notes |
|--------|------|------|-------|------|-------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| | | | | | | U.T.S (Mpa) | Y.S. (Mpa) | E.R. (%) | |
| No.1 | Bal. | 5 | 30 | 0.3 | 0.1Nb | 682.1 | 370.0 | 43 | J.K. Han etc., Material science & Engineering, 91, 1987, pp73~79 |
| No.2 | Bal. | 8 | 30 | 1.0 | | 921.4 | 512.1 | 54 | R.Wang etc., Metal progress, March 1983, pp72~76 |
| No.3 | Bal. | 10 | 20 | 1.0 | | 1020 | 777.1 | 44 | |
| No.4 | Bal. | 5 | 20 | 1.0 | | 842.8 | 419.3 | 59 | |
| No.5 | Bal. | 8.5 | 30.1 | 0.88 | | 874.2 | 455.7 | 58 | H.J. Lai etc., J. of Material science 24, 1989, pp2449~2453 |
| No.6 | Bal. | 8 | 30 | 1.0 | | 921.4 | 514.2 | 54 | D.J. Schmatz, Transactions of the ASM, 52, 1960, pp899 |
| No.7 | Bal. | 6.72 | 21.28 | 0.55 | | 870.0 | 433.5 | 62 | S.J Chang etc., Wear science & Engineering, 91, 1987, pp73~79 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|------|------|-------|------|------------------|--------|--------|------|----------------------------------|
| No.8 | Bal. | 8.38 | 29.78 | 1.14 | | 890.7 | 716.4 | 30 | |
| No.9 | Bal. | 7.38 | 27.1 | 0.86 | 0.16Ti+ 0.1Nb | 1321.4 | 1242.8 | 36.9 | T.F. Liu, U.S. patent 4968357 |
| No.10 | Bal. | 9.03 | 28.3 | 0.85 | | 878.5 | 635.7 | 27.8 | |

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Table 5: Fe-Al-Mn alloys

| Code | Composition | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| | Fe | Mn | Al | C | Ti | Cr | Si | Other |
| 1 | Bal. | 29.50 | 7.85 | 0.97 | 0.38 | | 0.90 | |
| 2 | Bal. | 28.42 | 7.93 | 0.93 | 0.75 | | | |
| 3 | Bal. | 30.15 | 7.95 | 1.04 | 0.96 | | 1.29 | |
| 4 | Bal. | 29.51 | 7.82 | 1.06 | 1.51 | 6.04 | | |
| 5 | Bal. | 30.25 | 7.95 | 0.96 | 2.05 | 6.15 | 1.01 | |
| 6 | Bal. | 29.20 | 7.89 | 0.92 | 2.50 | | | |
| 7 | Bal. | 29.45 | 8.96 | 1.09 | 0.51 | | 1.11 | |
| 8 | Bal. | 28.52 | 9.02 | 1.05 | 1.72 | 6.98 | | |
| 9 | Bal. | 29.53 | 8.87 | 0.98 | 2.09 | 5.52 | 1.23 | |
| 10 | Bal. | 29.13 | 9.98 | 0.94 | 2.01 | 6.06 | | |
| 11 | Bal. | 27.10 | 7.38 | 0.86 | 0.16 | | | 0.10Nb |
| 12 | Bal. | 28.30 | 9.03 | 0.85 | | | | |
| 13 | Bal. | 28.46 | 4.11 | 0.74 | | | | |
| 14 | Bal. | 28.65 | 8.02 | 0.98 | | | | |
| 15 | Bal. | 29.98 | 9.28 | 1.01 | | | 2.01 | |
| 16 | Bal. | 29.05 | 9.34 | 0.82 | | | | |
| 17 | Bal. | 28.97 | 8.23 | 0.81 | 0.52 | | | |
| 18 | Bal. | 30.19 | 9.53 | 1.32 | | | | |
| 19 | Bal. | 29.39 | 8.25 | 1.09 | | 8.77 | | |
| 20 | Bal. | 29.45 | 9.77 | 1.08 | | 3.82 | | |

3 *Code 11, 12, 13, 14 are examples for comparison.

4 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The main objective of the present invention is to provide a low density

6 alloy for a golf club head. The alloy consists essentially of manganese,

1 aluminum, carbon, chromium, and selectively silicon, titanium and
2 molybdenum. Wherein the composition of the alloy is 25 to 31 wt %
3 manganese, 7 to 10 wt % aluminum, 0.9 to 1.1 wt % carbon, 0.8 to 1.5 wt %
4 silicon, and 5 to 7 wt % chromium, 2 to 5 wt % titanium, 0.5 to 1 wt %
5 molybdenum and the balance being iron. Due to the addition of chromium,
6 titanium and molybdenum, the alloy has good resistance to corrosion.
7 Additionally, the alloy has a density of less than 6.6 g/cm^3 after quenching and
8 thermal treatment at $950\sim 1270^\circ\text{C}$ for 1~24 hours, even to 6.1 g/cm^3 . A good
9 finished surface quality is obtained after the alloy is forged at a temperature
10 from 800°C to 1050°C . Furthermore, a combination of high ductility and high
11 tensile strength is obtained after the alloy has been treated at a temperature
12 from 980°C to 1080°C for 1 to 4 hours and then treated at a temperature from
13 $500\sim 650^\circ\text{C}$ for 4~8 hours. Lastly, the alloy is cold rolled to change the
14 crystalline grain structure of the alloy and is finished by age process.
15 Therefore the low density alloy has high strength, high ductility and good
16 resistance to corrosion, and a good surface finish quality is obtained to satisfy
17 the requirements of the heads of golf clubs.

18 Further benefits and advantages of the present invention will become
19 apparent after a careful reading of the detailed description with appropriate
20 reference to the accompanying drawings.

21 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

22 Fig. 1 is a graph of surface roughness of code 2 alloy obtained at
23 different temperatures.

1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

2 An alloy in accordance with the present invention for heads of golf
3 clubs essentially consists of iron, manganese, aluminum, carbon, chromium,
4 and additionally silicon, titanium and molybdenum.

5 Specifically, the alloy contains 25 to 31 wt % manganese, 7 to 10 wt %
6 aluminum, 0.9 to 1.1 wt % carbon, 5 to 7 wt % chromium, 0.8 to 1.5 wt % silicon,
7 2 to 5 wt % titanium, 0.5 to 1 wt % molybdenum, and the balance being iron.

8 As listed in the Table 5, alloys from code 1 to 10 are practicable
9 embodiments having compositions within ranges of the present invention, and
10 alloys from code 11 to 20 are used for comparison.

11 Now with reference to Table 6, an alloy of code 2 has been found to have
12 a density of 6.596 g/cm³, a tensile strength reaching 986 Mpa, a yield strength of
13 763.4 Mpa, a ductility of 38.5%, a density of 6.518 g/cm³ after thermal treating at
14 1100°C for 2 hours. Then, the alloy of code 2 successfully undergoes both a 48-
15 hour 5% salt spray test and a 3000-impact durability test.

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Table 6:

| Code | Mechanical properties | | | | | | | Notes |
|------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | U.T.S. (Mpa) | Y.S. (Mpa) | E.R. (%) | Density (g/cm ³) | Salt spray (48 hours) | Roughness Ra(μ m) | Impact test (3000 particles) | |
| 1 | 921.5 | 756.0 | 42.5 | 6.596 | Fail | 2.6 | Pass | 1. 950°C forging |
| 2 | 986.0 | 763.4 | 38.5 | 6.518 | Pass | 2.6 | Pass | |
| 3 | 1137.4 | 855.6 | 28.1 | 6.453 | Pass | 2.9 | Pass | |
| 4 | 1197.4 | 935.6 | 21.1 | 6.437 | Pass | 2.8 | Pass | 2. 1000°C thermal treatment for 2 hours. |
| 5 | 1147.4 | 955.6 | 14.1 | 6.206 | Pass | 2.6 | Pass | |
| 6 | 1247.4 | 895.6 | 10.1 | 6.273 | Pass | 2.8 | Pass | |
| 7 | 1891.8 | 1785.6 | 17.5 | 6.513 | Pass | 2.7 | Pass | 3. Code 3, 4 further has thermal treatment at 550°C for 1 hour. |
| 8 | 1116.4 | 846.8 | 15.3 | 6.314 | Pass | 2.7 | Pass | |
| 9 | 1174.3 | 865.1 | 12.8 | 6.189 | Pass | 2.6 | Pass | |
| 10 | 1192.2 | 876.2 | 11.3 | 6.126 | Pass | 2.5 | Pass | 4. Code 7 further has cold roller finishing. |
| 11 | 1321.4 | 1242.8 | 36.9 | 6.771 | Fail | 2.4 | Pass | |
| 12 | 878.5 | 635.7 | 27.8 | 6.695 | Fail | 2.6 | Pass | |
| 13 | 621.6 | 459.0 | 47.0 | 7.217 | Fail | 2.5 | Pass | |
| 14 | 798.0 | 592.1 | 53.2 | 6.769 | Fail | 2.3 | Pass | |
| 15 | 810.6 | 618.1 | 9.8 | 6.647 | Fail | 2.5 | Pass | |
| 16 | 801.7 | 619.4 | 51.0 | 6.694 | Fail | 2.7 | Pass | |
| 17 | 793.0 | 593.1 | 51.2 | 6.517 | Fail | 2.5 | Pass | |
| 18 | 918.4 | 661.9 | 38.5 | 6.614 | Fail | 2.2 | Pass | |
| 19 | 934.5 | 632.9 | 37.5 | 6.738 | Pass | 2.7 | Pass | |
| 20 | 921.5 | 618.9 | 43.5 | 6.649 | Fail | 2.8 | Pass | |

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*Code 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 are examples for comparison.

3

An alloy of code 6 in conformity with material standards for club heads

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has a density of 6.273 g/cm³, a tensile strength reaching 1247.4 Mpa, a yield

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strength of 895.6 Mpa, a ductility of 10.1%, after thermal treating at 1100°C for 2

6

hours. Then, the alloy of code 6 successfully undergoes both a 48-hour 5% salt

7

spray test and a 3000-impact durability test.

8

An alloy of code 7 possesses better mechanical properties than other

normal alloys and has a density of 6.513 g/cm³, a tensile strength reaching 1891.8 Mpa, a yield strength of 1785.6 Mpa, a ductility reaching 17.5%, after roller treating at room temperature. Then, the alloy of code 7 successfully undergoes both a 48-hour 5% salt spray test and a 3000-impact durability test.

An alloy of code 11 disclosed by US patent No. 4968357 has a tensile strength of 1321.4 Mpa, a yield strength of 1242.8 Mpa, a ductility of 36.9% and a density of 6.871 g/cm³.

An alloy of code 12 disclosed by US patent No. 4968357 has a tensile strength of 878.5 Mpa, a yield strength of 635.7 Mpa, a ductility of 27.8%, and a density of 6.695 g/cm³.

The alloys of code 11 and code 12 each successfully underwent the 3000-impact test, but failed the 48-hour 5% salt spray test, and additionally their density exceeds the desired range of the invention.

An alloy of code 19 was found to have a tensile strength of 834.5 Mpa, a yield strength of 632.9 Mpa, a ductility of 37.5 % and a density of 6.738 g/cm³, after having been treated for 4 hours at 1100°C. The alloy of code 19 successfully underwent both the 3000-impact test and 48-hour 5% salt spray test, but has a density that exceeds the desired range of the invention.

An alloy of code 20 was also found to have a tensile strength of 821.5 Mpa, a yield strength of 618.9 Mpa, a ductility of 43.5% and a density of 6.649 g/cm³, after having been treated for 4 hours at 1100°C. The alloy of code 20 successfully underwent both the 3000-impact test and 48-hour 5% salt spray test, but has a density that exceeds the desired range of the invention.

With reference to Fig. 1, surface roughness of code 2 alloy increased

1 from 2.4 μm to 5.8 μm as the temperature of hot forging increased from 900°C to
2 1200°C. Therefore to meet the high quality requirement for golf clubs heads, the
3 alloy must be hot forged below 1100°C to obtain a surface roughness (Ra) of less
4 than 3 μm .

5 The chemical composition of the alloy should be strictly limited in
6 accordance with the present invention, and the reasons for limiting each of the
7 components follow.

8 Manganese is included and limited for the following reasons.

9 Manganese normally coexists with iron. Since manganese tends to
10 combine with sulfur, the hot brittleness caused by the sulfur can be eliminated.
11 Manganese also helps eliminate oxidates in the alloy. In high-carbon steel,
12 manganese combines with carbon or iron to form Mn_3C and Fe_3C , denoted by
13 $(\text{Fe}, \text{Mn})_3\text{C}$, to increase the alloy's strength and hardness. When the alloy has a
14 manganese content below 25 wt %, coarse iron grains are produced in the alloy
15 during manufacturing, which is not beneficial to the workability and ductility of
16 the alloy. If manganese content of the alloy is above 31 wt %, a large amount of
17 the $\beta\text{-Mn}$ phase is precipitated on the grain boundary, which results in brittleness
18 of the alloy. Consequently, the manganese content of the alloy is strictly limited
19 to between 25 wt % and 31 wt %.

20 Aluminum is included and limited for the following reasons.

21 Aluminum in an alloy has an excellent deoxydation effect, which not
22 only depresses the growth of crystals to disperse the oxidates and nitrides, but
23 also increases ductility, workability and toughness of the alloy. When the
24 aluminum content of the alloy is less than 7.0 wt %, the yield strength decays to

1 less than the desired 55 ksi. When the aluminum content in the alloy rises above
2 10.0 wt %, the yield strength increases to more than a desired 70 ksi. Therefore,
3 the aluminum content should be limited within the range of 7.0 wt % and 10.0 wt
4 %.

5 Carbon is included and limited for the following reasons.

6 In addition to precipitating carbides, the carbon content works as a
7 strengthening element to enhance the austenite structure. Coarse iron gains are
8 reduced, and the austenite structure is stabilized by increasing the carbon
9 content.

10 When the carbon content in the alloy exceeds 0.9 wt %, a stable
11 austenite structure is formed in the alloy, which causes the yield strength to be in
12 the desired range of 55~70 ksi. The carbon content should be limited within the
13 range of 0.9 wt % to 1.1 wt %.

14 Chromium is included and limited for the following reasons.

15 With the inclusion of chromium in the alloy, the alloy possesses not only
16 good resistance to corrosion and oxidation, but also good hardness and high
17 temperature strength, and particularly increases durability of high-carbon steel.

18 When the chromium content of the alloy was below 5.0 wt %, heads
19 made from the alloy failed the salt spray test. When the chromium content in the
20 alloy exceeded 7.0 wt %, the elongation rate of the alloy dropped below a desired
21 65%. Therefore, the chromium content should be limited strictly within the
22 range of 5.0 wt % to 7.0 wt %. If the chromium content is less than 5.0 wt %, the
23 club head should be electroplated to enhance the resistance to corrosion.

24 Silicon is included and limited for the following reasons.

1 The silicon in the alloy eliminates formation of air holes and enhances
2 contractibility and fluidity of the molten alloy steel. However, when the silicon
3 content exceeds 1.5 wt %, the alloy is embrittled and the elongation rate is less
4 than the desired 65%. Consequently, the silicon content of the alloy of the
5 invention should be limited within a range of 0.8 wt % to 1.5 wt %, which helps
6 in the casting process of the alloy.

7 Titanium is included and limited for the following reasons.

8 With addition of titanium to the alloy, the density of the alloy is reduced
9 and the resistance to corrosion of the alloy is increased. When the titanium
10 content of the alloy is below 0.35 wt %, the effect on density and resistance to
11 corrosion are not significant. When the titanium content in the alloy exceeds 2.5
12 wt %, the elongation rate of the alloy is reduced. Therefore, limiting the titanium
13 content of the alloy strictly within a range of 0.35 wt % and 2.5 wt % is beneficial
14 to reduce density and increasing resistance to corrosion.

15 Molybdenum is included and limited for the following reasons.

16 With the addition of molybdenum to the alloy, the critical temperature of
17 forming coarse austenite iron is raised to avoid tempering brittleness and to
18 enhance high temperature strength, creeping strength and high temperature
19 hardness. Furthermore, air holes are not easily formed in the alloy, and
20 molybdenum carbide particles having excellent wear-resisting efficiency are
21 precipitated. Moreover, addition of molybdenum also improves the fluidity of
22 the molten alloy steel.

23 When the molybdenum content in the alloy is above 1.0 wt %, the
24 molybdenum carbide particles are overly precipitated and cause brittleness of the

1 alloy. Therefore, the molybdenum content of the alloy limited strictly a range of
2 0.5 wt % to 1.0 % wt is beneficial to increasing fluidity of the molten alloy steel,
3 casting capability and resistance to corrosion.

4 Overall, the alloy metal for making golf heads for woods can be hot
5 forged at temperatures from 800°C to 1050°C, whereby the finished product will
6 have an excellent surface roughness (Ra) of 3 μm . If the alloy is hot worked at a
7 temperature from 1050°C to 1200°C, the alloy will have a surface roughness
8 greater than 3 μm and an intensified oxide skin to reduce the quality of the golf
9 head.

10 The alloy for golf heads for woods as described has the following
11 advantages.

12 1. Appropriate metallurgical properties achieved. By controlling the
13 content of aluminum, manganese and carbon, and adding a mechanical finishing
14 process, the tensile strength increases to a range of 220 to 280 ksi; and yield
15 strength increases to a range of 200 to 230 ksi.

16 2. Low density. By controlling the content of aluminum within 7.0~10.0
17 wt %, or adding titanium within 2.0~5.0 wt %, the alloy possesses an FCC
18 structure to reduce the density of the alloy to 6.6~6.1 g/cm^3 .

19 3. Resistance to corrosion. The alloy includes chromium, titanium and
20 molybdenum, which increase the resistance to corrosion, and also reduce
21 production cost of the heads of golf clubs.

22 The characteristic of the invention is to produce an alloy for a head of a
23 golf club by suitable addition of alloying elements and by controlling heat
24 treatment conditions. The alloy of the invention has a density of less than 6.6

1 g/cm³, a high ductility of less than 10%, a tensile strength within 220 ksi to 280
2 ksi, a yield strength within 200 ksi to 230 ksi and high resistance to corrosion. In
3 accordance with the present invention, the mechanical properties of the alloy for
4 heads of golf clubs are different from those of other recently developed alloys
5 and more in conformity with the requirement of high strength, high ductility and
6 resistance to corrosion of the heads of golf clubs.

7 It is to be understood, however, that the above illustration is only to
8 clarify the feature of the alloy for making heads of golf clubs, and should not be
9 deemed as the scope of the invention.